



File Code: 1950/2240

Date: March 19, 2014

Dear Interested Party:

I am pleased to inform you that the *Invasive Plant Management Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Medicine Bow – Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland* is available for public review and comment. The draft EIS (DEIS) is currently filed online at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/mbr/landmanagement/projects>. To save printing and mailing costs, we are asking you to review the DEIS online. If online viewing is not an option for you, please contact Melissa Martin of my staff at (307) 745-2371, and she will mail a copy to you.

The DEIS was prepared in compliance with the *Medicine Bow National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, December 2003*; the *Routt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, February 1998*; the *Thunder Basin National Grassland Land and Resource Management Plan - Northern Great Plains Management Plans Revision, July 2002*; the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations.

The four action alternatives analyzed in the DEIS were designed to do the following:

- Meet existing law, regulation, and agency policy directing the Forest Service to treat non-native and invasive plants.
- Update existing management direction to include new invasive species and new treatments.
- Make cooperative treatment and control of invasive plant species more consistent and effective across land ownership boundaries.
- Help meet or maintain desired resource conditions on the MBRTB, including limiting the spread of invasive plants into areas with little or no infestation to help reduce fire hazard and/or risk.

The DEIS describes the four alternatives in detail and discloses the impacts of their implementation. Under alternative 1 (no action, no change from current management), the current weed management program would continue. Herbicides would only be applied using ground-based methods; aerial application would not be used. Alternative 2, the proposed action, would expand current management to include treatment of new invasive species; use of new, more species-specific, EPA-registered herbicides; aerial herbicide application; and new protection measures. Alternative 3 is the same as alternative 2 except that it would not include aerial herbicide application. Alternative 4 would treat invasive plants using mechanical, biological, and cultural weed control methods; herbicides would not be used.

The Environmental Protection Agency will publish a notice of availability (NOA) in the Federal Register (estimate March 21st) which will initiate the formal comment period for the DEIS. To ensure consideration in the analysis process prior to the final decision, comments on the DEIS



must be postmarked or received within 45 days following the date of publication of the NOA. Comments should include: (1) name, address, telephone number, and organization represented, if any; (2) title of the document on which comments are being submitted; and (3) specific facts and information to be considered.

Please address written comments to:

Forest Supervisor
2468 Jackson Street
Laramie, WY 82070-6535
(307) 745-2300
FAX: (307) 745-2398
E-mail: comments-rocky-mountain-medicine-bow-laramie@fs.fed.us (Acceptable formats for electronic comments are. rtf, .pdf, .doc, or .docx).

This project was originally scoped under the provisions of 36 CFR 215 (Notice, Comment, and Appeal procedures for National Forest System Projects and Activities). It is now subject to the provisions of 36 CFR 218 (Project-level, Pre-decisional Administrative Review Process). Individuals or organizations who submitted written comments in response to scoping under 36 CFR 215 have standing to object under 36 CFR 218, Subparts A and B. Individuals or organizations who did not provide written comments during scoping must provide specific written comments (as defined in 36 CFR 218.2) on the DEIS in order to have standing to object.

Specific written comments (§218.2) on the proposed project will be accepted for 45 calendar days after EPA publishes the notice of availability in the Federal Register. Publication is expected on March 21, 2014. Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider (36 CFR 218.2).

Those who submit specific written comments on the DEIS during the 45-day comment period will be eligible to file an objection under 36 CFR 218. Under this arrangement, an objector will have 45 days following completion of the final EIS and draft Record of Decision (ROD) to raise objections to the proposal. The project cannot go forward until all objections have been responded to within a 45-day timeframe. Once all objections have been responded to and addressed, a final ROD will be published and the project can proceed.

To obtain copies of the DEIS or to request further information, please contact Melissa Martin at (307) 745-2371 or Misty Hays at (307) 358-7102.

Sincerely,

/s/ Phil Cruz
PHIL CRUZ
Forest Supervisor

cc: Leslie Horsch
Bob Mountain